

interact with one another, or at least track each other's work. Historically, this type of interdisciplinary cross talk has been somewhat unusual, but with the advent of electronic databases, the ability of medical researchers, for example, to reference the most recent findings in the organizational or educational literatures has been made much easier. By making such references, researchers in one subdiscipline may be able to find out what precious information other disciplines have uncovered about when people are likely to be right or wrong in their self-appraisals, what psychological mechanisms produce those patterns of accuracy or error, and what interventions might bring self-perception into a closer alignment with reality.

#### *For Policymakers and Practitioners*

For policymakers and real-world practitioners, the implication of this review is that the accuracy of self-evaluation should not be assumed. For example, in business settings, one should not assume that employees have achieved the level of expertise that they claim. Instead, one should take pains to provide independent tests of competence (such as the opinions of other people). We have enumerated a number of flaws typical of self-evaluation, and practitioners should be wary of how these types of flaws might be relevant to their own work.

For example, consider the area of medical education. Many medical schools emphasize to their students that they should independently develop the initiative, habits, and expertise necessary to educate themselves about the types of situations and challenges they will face in the classroom, the medical-school clinic, and, ultimately, in their own offices after beginning their practice (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Candy, 1991). Obviously, such self-directed learning requires the ability to recognize the areas where further work is most needed—where one's shortcomings are the most severe and in need of remediation. This review, however, suggests that one cannot simply assume that individuals, left to their own devices, will be able to spot their own shortcomings. Therefore, it might be prudent to provide some sort of intervention (e.g., peer review, standard tests) that gives students—and practitioners after they have left formal training—feedback about their strengths and weaknesses.

Some common themes run through the literature on improving the accuracy of self-judgment. One theme that emerges from our review is that the road to self-accuracy may involve information from or about other people (see Dunning, 2005, for an extended discussion). For example, in educational settings, benchmarking has been shown to improve self-evaluation accuracy, as has peer assessment. In the business world, having an independent and active board of directors has been shown to prevent CEOs from making the kind of mistakes that grow out of hubris. Another theme, coming from the organizational literature, is that cognitive repairs can be applied to the kinds of self-judgments that are often made with error, thus sparing individuals and their organizations the costs associated with faulty self-assessment.

#### **Unfinished Portraits**

In any event, this review of the literature has prompted us to believe that for both researcher and practitioner, there is much exciting work to be done on the psychology of faulty self-assessment. We feel that the psychological literature has painted only a few brushstrokes toward a portrait of the person as self-evaluator—and there is much more painting to be done to complete that portrait. But, perhaps more important, there is also much work to be done about another portrait well worth painting. That second portrait is one that depicts what an individual looks like when he or she has achieved an accurate impression of his or her talents, capacities, and character. How one retouches the first portrait to create the second is an issue that requires much more theoretical and empirical work.

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